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Site Fact Sheet
Little Elk Creek
Area-Wide One Cleanup Program Pilot Project
New Jersey Fireworks Site
1726 Old Philadelphia Road
Elkton, MD 21921

Property Description

The New Jersey Fireworks site is located approximately 2.4 miles west of Elkton and 2.5 miles east of the town of North East at 1726 Old Philadelphia Road in Cecil County, Maryland. The site consists of 2 parcels that comprise approximately 46.5 acres and is situated in a rural setting just north of the Elk Neck State Forest. Old Philadelphia Road (Route 7) forms the northern border of the site. Forest View Village Trailer Park borders the site to the east, Mill Creek and Amtrak railroad tracks form the western and southern borders of the site. The home of the Bello family is situated topographically up gradient and is located on a parcel at 1720 Old Philadelphia Road that pinches into the site near the midpoint of the property. A new office and gravel parking lot have been built and a warehouse has been erected on the southern portion of the property.

An underutilized industrial park located along the Little Elk Creek in Cecil County, Maryland has been selected as an Area-Wide Pilot Project under U.S. EPA's One Cleanup Program and Land Revitalization initiatives. The goals of the Little Elk Creek Pilot Project is to address a widespread groundwater contamination problem stemming from multiple industrial sources within a geographic area and support development and reuse needs of the surrounding community.

Property History

In 1956, the New Jersey Fireworks Company purchased the property to manufacture "Class C" fireworks. Manufacturing occurred on the eastern portions of the property, while waste from the production of fireworks took place in a pond formerly used as a clay quarry located at the western portion of the property (Route 7 Dump).

Environmental Investigations

In 1988, the New Jersey Fireworks Company was identified by the MDE as a hazardous waste generator and was subject to regulations set forth by the Hazardous Waste Enforcement Division of the MDE. The area near the sparkler manufacturing building was of primary concern, as concentrations of barium in the soil reached 63,000 mg/kg. Later that year, a Consent Order was

issued by MDE to ensure the proper handling and disposal of hazardous and solid waste at the facility. Inspections by Hazardous Waste Enforcement Division personnel continue to occur at the New Jersey Fireworks site on a regular basis.

In 1999, the New Jersey Fireworks site was inspected by the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) and the MDE. The inspection revealed that large amounts of fireworks were being stored in an unsafe manner. According to representatives of the ATF, the on-site manufacturing of fireworks ceased approximately seven to eight years ago. The types of fireworks previously manufactured include sparklers and black powder explosives.

The 1999 ATF/MDE inspection also revealed that several buildings on site contained old fireworks. Many of these buildings were in poor condition. Several pit-like depressions were located in a wooded area and were previously used for the burning and disposal of old fireworks. Rusted thirty-gallon and fifty-gallon drums litter the site. Some of the drums still possess legible labels indicating that they contained potassium perchlorate. Lastly, a waste disposal area is located on the south side of the New Jersey Fireworks property. This waste disposal area consisted of wooden pallets, drums, aerosol cans, oil containers, auto parts, cinders and other scattered debris, some of which looked like asbestos material.

As a result of the ATF/MDE inspection, extensive cleanup of the site has occurred. Nearly all of the dilapidated buildings have been demolished and removed. All of the abandoned aboveground storage tanks, most of the empty drums, most of the waste pile, and trailers that housed improperly stored hazardous and suspected hazardous materials have been removed with oversight of MDE's Hazardous Waste Enforcement Division.

In April 2000, MDE conducted a PA/SI at New Jersey Fireworks to assess potential contamination at the site. Elevated levels of a number of inorganics were found in onsite soils and sediments. Because perchlorates are used in the manufacture of fireworks, MDE also analyzed the samples for perchlorates. None were found; however, holding times on the samples were exceeded.

Contaminants

This site may be a potential source of perchlorate, which has been found in groundwater in the area. Barium has been found in onsite soils.

Cleanup and Next Steps

In May 2002, MDE became involved with a developing perchlorate problem in the groundwater

impacting the Elkton well field. Perchlorates are used in the manufacture of fireworks. MDE determined that both the New Jersey Fireworks facility and the Route 7 Dump, which is adjacent to the facility, should be reassessed to determine if either may be the possible source of groundwater contamination in the Elkton well field. MDE plans to investigate both areas in the Summer of 2004 under the PA/SI Cooperative Agreement with EPA.

Lead Agency and Contacts

MDE is the lead agency and will be conducting further investigation of this site under the PA/SI Cooperative Agreement with EPA.

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